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A NEW *LERISTA* AND TWO NEW *CTENOTUS* (LACERTILIA: SCINCIDAE) FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA

G.M. STORR*

ABSTRACT

The new taxa are *Lerista ips* from desert sandridges, *Ctenotus uber johnstonei* from the north-eastern interior, and *Ctenotus rutilans* from the Hamersley Range.

INTRODUCTION

Lerista Bell and *Ctenotus* Storr are the largest genera of Australian skinks; they are especially numerous in the arid and semiarid zones. For revisions of *Lerista* the reader is referred to Storr (1972, 1976), and of *Ctenotus* to Storr (1968, 1971, 1975).

NEW TAXA

Lerista ips sp. nov.

Holotype

R63562 in Western Australian Museum, collected by Dr A.A. Burbidge on 9 May 1979 near Lake Auld, Western Australia, in 22°07'S, 123°52'E.

Diagnosis

A member of the *L. bipes* species-group (Storr, 1972), most like *L. bipes* and *L. labialis* but with stouter body, broader head, no dark upper lateral stripe, and single loreal.

Distribution

Known from one locality in the Great Sandy Desert of Western Australia and one in south-west of Northern Territory.

* Western Australian Museum, Francis Street, Perth, Western Australia 6000.

Plate 1: Holotype of *Lerista ips* photographed in life by R.E. Johnstone.

Description

Snout depressed, very sharp in profile and extending well beyond mouth. Eye very small. Eyelid movable. No trace of foreleg (including groove). Toes 2. Snout-vent length (mm): 56-60. Length of appendages (% SVL): hindleg 17 (N 2), tail 68 (N 1).

Nasals separated moderately widely. No prefrontals. Frontal a little wider than long. Frontoparietals and interparietal fused into a large triangular shield. Parietals long and narrow, in short contact. Nuchals 1 or 2. Supraoculars 2, both in contact with frontal. Supraciliaries 0 + 1. Loreals 1, very much wider than high. Preoculars 1. Postoculars 3. Temporals 3, lower secondary much smaller than subequal primary and upper secondary. Upper labials 6, fourth subocular, last much smaller than fifth. Ear aperture minute. Midbody scale rows 20. Lamellae under longer toe 9, smooth.

Coloration of holotype. Tip of snout white. Rest of dorsal and dorsolateral surfaces brownish white ('earthworm pink' in life, *fide* L.A. Smith). Eight uppermost series of dorsal and dorsolateral scales each with a faint brown spot, strongest on outermost series; spots on next-to-outermost series represented on temple and lores by a faint brown streak. Lower surfaces white.

Remarks

The holotype had fallen overnight into a pit set by Dr A.A. Burbidge in the crest of a sandridge. The ridge was vegetated with *Triodia* and scattered

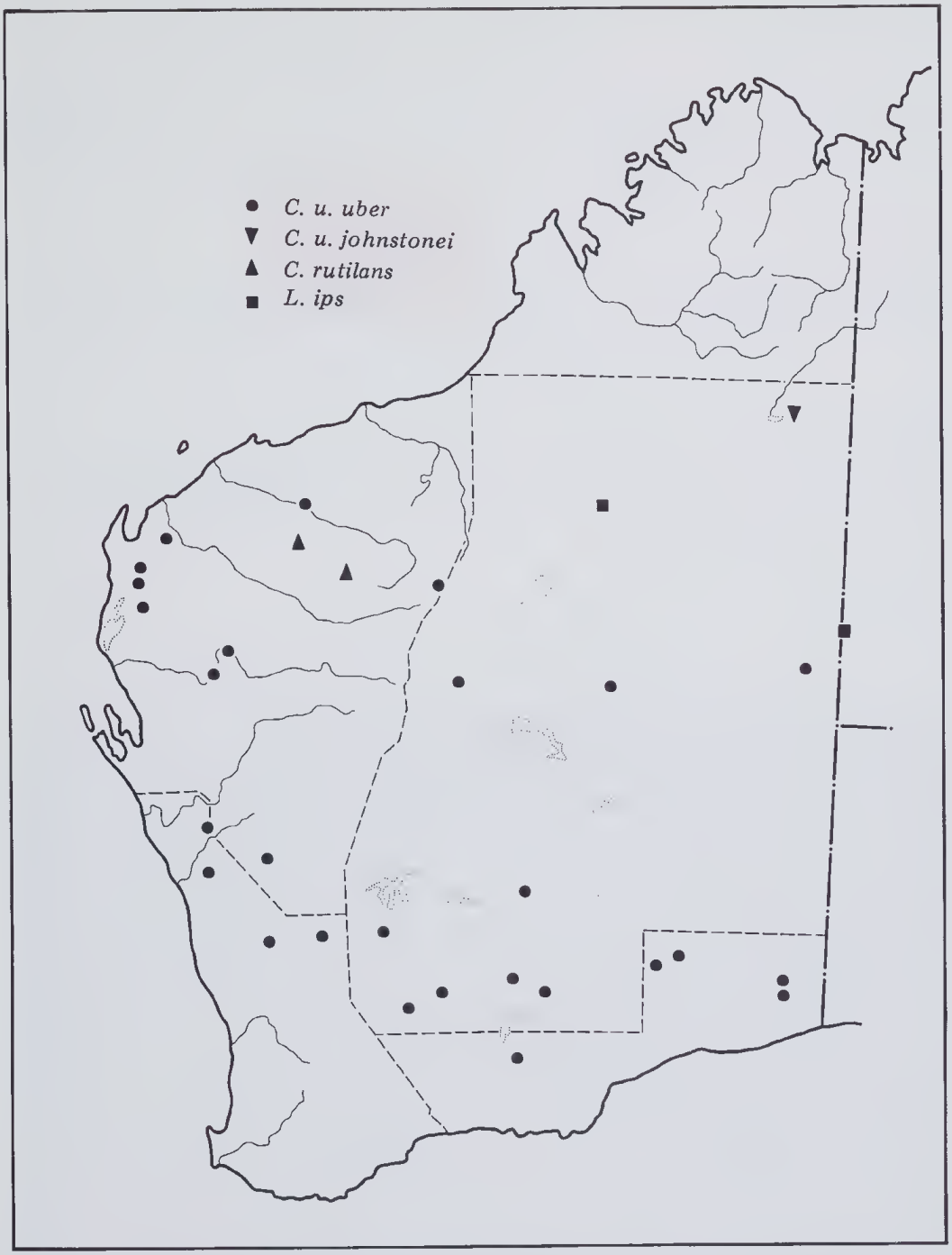

Fig. 1: Map of Western Australia showing location of specimens of *Lerista ips*, *Ctenotus uber johnstonei*, *Ctenotus uber uber* and *Ctenotus rutilans*.

shrubs of *Grevillea stenobotrya* and *Thryptomene maisonneuvii* (L.A. Smith, pers. comm.).

The paratype (field number JSE 179) was collected by Mr W.H. Butler on 11 April 1967 when a member of the Joint British Services Expedition to Central Australia; the specimen was buried in shallow sand at the crest of a *Triodia*-covered sandridge east of the Bonython Range. I am grateful to Mr A.F. Stimson of the British Museum for a loan of the paratype.

Paratype

Northern Territory: 20 km S of Lake Macdonald in 23°42'S, 129°02'E (BMNH 1970.354).

Ctenotus uber johnstonei subsp. nov.

Holotype

R63277 in the Western Australian Museum, collected by Messrs L.A. Smith and R.E. Johnstone on 21 April 1979 at Balgo Hill, Western Australia, in 20°07'S, 127°48'E.

Diagnosis

Differing from other subspecies of *C. uber* in its contiguous nasals. Agreeing with *C. uber uber* (Storr, 1968) in its predominantly reddish (rather than

Plate 2: Holotype of *Ctenotus uber johnstonei* photographed in life by R.E. Johnstone.

olive) coloration and in the well-developed laterodorsal and dorsolateral stripes, and with *C. uber orientalis* (Storr, 1971) in the well-developed vertebral stripe and relatively short tail.

Distribution

Known from a single locality in the arid north-eastern interior of Western Australia.

Description

Snout-vent length (mm): 32-69 (N 9, mean 44.8). Length of appendages (% SVL): foreleg 28-33 (N 9, mean 30.4), hindleg 47-55 (N 9, mean 50.4), tail 170-197 (N 4, mean 180.7).

Nasals in contact (varying from just touching to forming a long median suture). Prefrontals separated or in very short contact. Supraoculars 4, first 3 in contact with frontal, first as wide as or wider than second. Supraciliaries 7, fourth to penultimate markedly smaller than others (8 in one specimen with fifth to penultimate smaller). Palpebrals (*recte* upper ciliaries) 9-12 (N 9, mean 10.1). Second loreal 1.5-1.9 (N 9, mean 1.68) times as wide as high. Presuboculars 2 (3 in two specimens). Upper labials 8. Ear lobules 3-6, subacute in adults, rounded in juveniles. Nuchals 2-5 (N 9, mean 3.6). Mid-body scale rows 32-35 (N 8, mean 33.2). Toes slightly to moderately compressed; 24-32 (N 9, mean 26.3) lamellae under fourth, each with a dark brown obtuse keel.

Dorsal ground colour reddish brown, the tail tinged with olive (especially in juveniles). Narrow black vertebral stripe from neck to base of tail. Wide black laterodorsal stripe from back of head to proximal part of tail, enclosing a series of reddish spots (these spots and paravertebral stripe whitish in juveniles). Narrow creamy white dorsolateral stripe from brow to proximal part of tail. Brownish black upper lateral zone enclosing two series of white dots; represented on tail by wide greyish brown stripe (dark proximally, pale distally). No white midlateral stripe. Lower lateral zone rich reddish brown with 4 or 5 series of small white flecks.

Remarks

Named after co-collector of the type series, Ronald E. Johnstone of the Western Australian Museum.

I am grateful to Mr L.A. Smith for a colour description in life and for notes on the habitat. The specimens were caught under low chenopod shrubs (*Bassia* and *Atriplex*) growing on colluvium at the foot of a sandstone hill.

Paratypes

Eastern Division (W.A.): Balgo Hill (63278-84, 63290).

Ctenotus rutilans sp. nov.

Holotype

R63628 in Western Australian Museum, collected by Mr J.N. Dunlop in June 1979 at 27 km SE of Mt Meharry, Western Australia, in 23°10'S, 118°45'E.

Diagnosis

A member of the *C. leonhardii* species-group, most like *C. uber uber* (Storr, 1968) but head and neck coppery red and midbody scale rows and subdigital lamellae more numerous.

Distribution

The Hamersley Range, north-western Western Australia.

Description

Snout-vent length (mm): 36-53. Length of appendages (% SVL): foreleg 31-33, hindleg 53-57, tail 178-202.

Nasals in very short contact or separated. Prefrontals separated. Supraoculars 4, first 3 in contact with frontal, second not wider than first. Supraciliaries 7 or 8. Palpebrals (*recte* upper ciliaries) 9. Second loreal 1.4-1.8 times as wide as high. Presuboculars 2. Upper labials 8. Ear lobules 5-7. Nuchals 2-5. Midbody scale rows 34 in holotype; 40 in paratypes. Toes compressed; 31-33 lamellae under fourth, each with a dark narrow callus or obtuse keel.

Coloration of holotype. Upper and lateral surfaces of head, neck and foreleg coppery red; of tail and hindleg greyish brown. Narrow black vertebral stripe from neck to base of tail. Paravertebral stripe from neck to base of tail, successively coppery red, reddish brown and greyish brown. Wide black laterodorsal stripe enclosing a series of spots of same colour as paravertebral stripe; inner edge on hindback splitting off to form a narrow black dorsal stripe. Narrow dorsolateral stripe from neck to base of tail, of same colour as paravertebral stripe. Upper lateral zone blackish brown, enclosing *ca* 3 irregular series of pale reddish brown dots; represented on tail by broad stripe. Broad white midlateral stripe restricted to immediately in front of and behind hindleg. Lower lateral zone reddish brown with 2 or 3 irregular series of reddish white dots. Limbs boldly striped with black.

Coloration of paratypes. As in holotype but pattern less distinct, e.g. dorsolateral stripe reduced to a series of short dashes.

Remarks

C. rutilans is the latest addition to the ever-growing list of Pilbara endemics. Other lizards in this category include *Egernia pilbarensis*, *Ctenotus*

rubicundus, *Diplodactylus savagei*, *D. mitchelli*, *D. wombeyi*, *Varanus pilbarensis* and *Delma elegans*.

The paratypes of *C. rutilans* were pit-trapped by Mr C. Dawe on a scree slope vegetated with *Triodia* and scattered *Acacia*.

Paratypes

North-west Division (W.A.): 26 km NNW of Mt Brockman (22°15'S, 117°11'E) (63611, 64449).

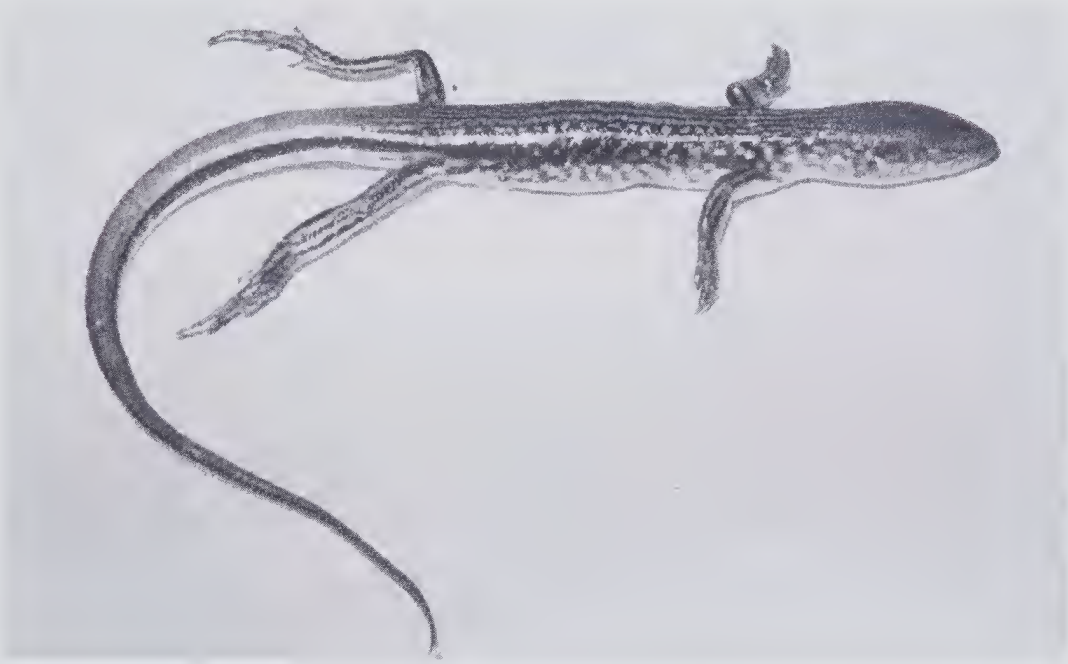

Plate 3: Holotype of *Ctenotus rutilans*.

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